

Psy 320 SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Instructor: Dr. Gary Nickell, Psychology Department Fall 2008

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Home page: <http://www.mnstate.edu/nickell/>

Class web page: <http://www.mnstate.edu/nickell/classes/psy320/psy320.htm>

Class time & days: 12:30 - 1:20 PM MWF in BR 363

Text: Aronson, E., Wilson, T., & Akert, R. (2007). *Social Psychology (6th Ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Text website: http://wps.prenhall.com/hss_aronson_socpsych_6

Bulletin course description and prerequisites: Theories and research involving individual's reactions to others. Topics: social perception, attraction, social influence, aggression, social exchange. Students must have earned six credits in psychology courses prior to enrolling in this course.

Course objectives: The objectives of this course are to: (1) make students aware of the major topics in social psychology, (2) help students understand how the scientific method and theory is used and applied in social psychology, (3) have students analyze, and apply social psychology concepts and theories in a paper and (4) help students understand how the knowledge gained from this course can be used in their own personal and professional work life.

Student learning outcomes:

- Student can demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in social psychology;
- Student can respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes;
- Student can understand and apply psychological principles;
- Student can demonstrate information competence and the ability to use computers and other technology for many purposes;
- Student can demonstrate effective writing skills in various formats and for various purposes;
- Student can recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of sociocultural and international diversity.

Evaluation standards/grading: Your final grade for this class will be based on four (100 point) exams, 2 class assignments (30 points), and one analysis paper (70 points). The exams will consist of multiple choice questions and short answer essay questions, which will come from lecture, chapters in the text, handouts, class demonstrations, and any films or videotapes shown during class. The paper is required in order to receive a passing grade in the class.

No exams will be given early. In general, make-up exams will not be given without good cause and written notification of the reason. All make-up exams must be completed by December 9th.

Extra credit for participating in research is **NOT** available for this class. There will be several Extra Credit Quizzes (ECQ's) throughout the semester. The ECQ's will be 1 or 2 multiple choice questions handed out at the beginning of a class period. The ECQ questions will be based on previous in-class lecture material. Extra credit may be available for other activities. There is a maximum of 20 points extra credit.

The Final letter grade system is listed below. Total points = 500

A = 90% or 450 pts.	B = 80% or 400 pts.	C = 70% or 350 pts.
D = 60% or 300 pts.	F = Less than 60%	

Attendance: Although no formal points are allocated for attendance, regular class attendance is expected and highly recommended. There will be questions asked on the exams from material covered in class but which is not in the text. Several days of material are not covered at all in the text. Several unannounced extra credit assignments will be given during the semester. It is your responsibility to notify me of any condition that may interfere with regular class attendance. Appropriate classroom behavior is expected.

Academic honesty: The *MSUM Student Handbook* (<http://www.mnstate.edu/sthandbook>) discusses student conduct code issues including academic integrity such as cheating or plagiarism. If you have any questions regarding this conduct code or your rights, please review the handbook. With regard to plagiarism, the policy states: "The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: (a) the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment, (b) the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials." If I have convincing evidence of academic dishonesty, the student may receive an F for the course regardless of their performance in other assignments.

Special accommodations: "Students with disabilities who believe they may need an accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact Greg Toutges, Coordinator of Disability Services at 477-5859 (Voice) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY), CMU 114 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion."

Social Psychology Analysis Paper: The focus of this paper is on social psychological concepts and theories. You must demonstrate both knowledge of the relevant principle, concept, or theory, and show how it applies to the target behavior(s). The purpose of this final paper is to encourage you to analyze and apply social psychology concepts and theories. You are expected to write a 6-8 page (not counting the title page, or references) double-spaced paper with 1-inch margins. You should use basic APA style format, according to the 5th edition of the APA Manual. A number of writing and research web resources appropriate for this class are available on the web at:
http://www.mnstate.edu/nickell/writing_resources.htm

You are to take an episode(s) of behavior(s) by a fictional character from a book, movie, or television program and analyze that behavior(s) using social psychology principles, concepts, or theories. You may also analyze real world behavior rather than a fictional behavior. There are a number of things that you must include in this paper:

1. A brief description of the behavior(s) being analyzed. Assume that I am not familiar with the book, movie, etc.; provide enough information for me to be able to determine the applicability of the principles you select as explanations. Do not spend more than 1 page giving a plot summary. The focus in the paper is on your analysis and explanation and not just the behavior being analyzed.
2. Use 3-5 separate social psychological principles, concepts or theories to explain the behavior. Cite the name of the relevant concept along with the key researcher or theorist. Use your own words to paraphrase or describe the key concepts or theories. Avoid quotes like the plague. You may quote from the character in the movie or book if it helps with your explanation. I expect proper APA citation for each key concept or theory cited in your paper. Thoroughly explain how the psychological concept or theory accounts for the behavior that you are describing.
3. As described throughout the class, behavior is usually a function of the person, the situation, and their interaction. Explicitly describe the role of personal and situational factors and their interactions in producing the behavior(s). Do not focus solely on the person (don't commit the fundamental attribution error!), give due weight to both the situation and the interaction of the person and the situation. It is possible that personal characteristics may have little relevance to the behavior.
4. Include a reference page for any citations you included in your paper.

Possible examples of applying principles might consist of: using principles of persuasion from Chapter 7 in explaining how a fictional con man succeeds. You might explain a budding movie romance in terms of various theories of love described in Chapter 10. You could try to explain the success of a character in business based on applications of principles of impression management in Chapter 5. There are plenty of examples of real or fictional discrimination that could be analyzed with concepts and theories in Chapter 13. There are many examples of conformity and obedience that could be analyzed with principles describe in Chapter 8.

On Monday December 1st or before, 1 copy of your final paper is due. In addition, e-mail me a copy of your paper as an attachment. The electronic copy will be used to check for plagiarism. For each day the paper is late the grade will be dropped by two points (up to 16 points). The theory paper is worth 70 points. The last day a paper can be turned in is Monday December 15th.

Course Schedule

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Tentative Topic(s)</u>	<u>Reading Assignments</u>
1	8/25 8/27 8/29	Syllabus Introduction, History History, Cross-Cultural	Chapter 1
2	9/1 9/3 9/5	No classes (Labor Day) Scientific Method and Theory Research Methods	Chapter 2
3	9/8 9/10 9/12	Research Methods Research Ethics Social Cognition	Chapter 3
4	9/15 9/17 9/19	Heuristics Schemas Exam 1 (Chapters 1,2,3)	
5	9/22 9/24 9/26	Social Perception Facial Expressions Attribution	Chapter 4
6	9/29 10/1 10/3	Attribution Self-Knowledge Self-Presentation	Chapter 5
7	10/6 10/8 10/10	Social Comparison Cognitive Dissonance Need to Justify	Chapter 6
8	10/13 10/15 10/17	No classes (Fall Breather) Exam 2 (Chapters 4,5,6) Attitudes, Measurement	Chapter 7
9	10/20 10/22 10/24	Attitude Formation Attitude Change Elaboration Likelihood Model	
10	10/27 10/29 10/31	Prejudice Stereotypes Reducing Prejudice	Chapter 13
11	11/3 11/5 11/7	Social Influence and Power Conformity Obedience	Chapter 8

12	11/10	Exam 3 (Chapters 7,13,8)	Chapter 9
	11/12	Social Facilitation	
	11/14	Group Tasks, Social Loafing	
13	11/17	Group Decision Making	Chapter 10
	11/19	Deindividuation	
	11/21	Attraction	
14	11/24	Physical Attractiveness	
		Fall Break (Nov. 26-28)	
15	12/1	Theories of Love (1 copy of paper and electronic copy are due)	Chapter 11
	12/3	Prosocial Behavior	
	12/5	Prosocial Behavior	
16	12/8	Prosocial Behavior	
	12/10	Study Day – no classes	

Final Class Period Tuesday December 16th at 12 noon (Exam 4 - Chapters 9,10,11)

Note: I reserve the right to change the exam and assignment dates, assignments and points for assignments, and deadlines at my discretion if needed.